

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

I. THE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

A. Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to delineate the primary principles, policy guidelines, and the Classification Plan which are the basis for the classification system used for the classified and partially exempt (PX) services in the State of Alaska.

B. Scope

This SOP will describe general classification principles and factors used in analyzing positions and components of the classification system in the classified and PX services. The Classification Plan is included in Addendum A. Addendum B lists commonly used references and resources.

C. Authority

AS 39.25.010—Merit principles, salary plan
AS 39.25.150(1)—Require rules on a classification plan
2 AAC 07.005—Classification Plan
2 AAC 07.010—Class Specifications
2 AAC 07.015—Class titles

D. Whole Job Classification

A classification plan is an organized arrangement of positions designed to facilitate a number of human resource management functions including recruitment, selection, salary administration, transfer and layoff. Positions bearing sufficient similarities are grouped together, given a single classification title and treated similarly for these purposes. The State of Alaska has developed a position classification plan in which all positions in the classified and partially exempt services are grouped together on the basis of duties and responsibilities. Comparative analysis of the “whole job” is the method used by the State for position classification and salary setting. The job as a whole is evaluated by comparing it against job class specifications and existing positions which illustrate the kind and level of work performed by a particular job class. The State’s pay plan preparation, maintenance, revision, and administration is based upon the position classification plan and reflects the principle of like pay for like work [Alaska Statute 39.25.150(2)]. In setting salaries, comparison of the whole job is made to other internal job classes and/or positions outside State government.

E. Components of the Classification System

The basic **components** of the **classification system**, in order from smallest to largest:

The Classification System

**STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

1. Position – A group of duties and responsibilities designed to be performed by an individual and which is authorized and designated by a position control number (PCN).
2. Job Class – A group of positions sufficiently similar in duties and responsibilities, degree of supervision exercised or required, and entrance requirements that they may be treated the same for purposes of recruitment, selection, compensation, transfer and layoff. The kind and level of work assigned to positions in a job class must be essentially the same.

Example: Administrative Manager I (1907)

3. Class Series – Two or more classes sharing a common title which are similar as to type of work, but differ as to level of difficulty and responsibility.

Example: Administrative Manager I, II, III and IV (1907,1908,1909 and 1910).

4. Job Family – A group of classes and class series that are closely related. Typically, initial preparation for employment and subsequent career progression are similar for all job classes in a family.

Example: General Administrative (P19XX)

5. Occupational Group – A group of related classes, class series, and job families that encompass relatively broad occupations, professions, or activities.

Example: Clerical, Fiscal, and Administrative (P1XXX)

The Classification Plan, organized by these components, is Addendum A to this SOP.

F. Factors

In order to assign positions to job classes, comparisons must be made between the position and the relevant job class specifications. Also, in setting salary ranges for new job classes, comparisons between classes must be made. The factors described below provide a basis for analyzing positions and for making these comparisons.

1. Nature, variety and complexity of work

“Nature” includes the kind of work performed as shown by such elements as the subject matter, profession or occupation involved. “Variety” as

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**STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

applied to a position includes the range of duties and the inherently different kinds of work included in the position. As applied to a class, it reflects the range of kinds of work and skills which are included in the class. "Complexity" includes the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done, and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

Consider the following:

What subject matter, profession, occupation or function is involved?

What skills, knowledge and techniques are applied?

Are the various tasks in the same or related subject matter fields?

Are the various tasks of a recurring type or do they present nonrepetitive problems?

Are assignments made to the position selected on the basis of difficulty?

2. Nature of supervision received by the incumbent.

Supervision received covers the nature and extent of deliberate, planned supervisory controls exercised over the incumbent of the position (or, in relation to a class, typically exercised over incumbents in a class of positions) which limit the scope of work, the independence with which it is performed, and the nature and finality of decisions. Included are items such as the basis for selection of work assignments, the nature of direct instructions or advice from a supervisor the incumbent receives, and the extent and degree to which actions and decisions are limited (by review of all cases, by spot checks, or review of the program for effectiveness or for conformity with policy).

Consider the following:

From whom does the employee receive instructions?

What type of instructions are they and how general or detailed?

Is supervision over the position technical, functional, administrative?

Is the work reviewed during process or upon completion?

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**STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Is the work product given a technical review or is it reviewed only for compliance with administrative matters?

3. Nature of available guidelines for performance of work.

This factor relates to the extent to which performance of the work is controlled or influenced by rules, regulations, manuals, procedures, prescribed work practices, principles, policies, or other written instruction or methods.

Consider the following:

How is the employee's work controlled by manuals, rules, regulations, and policies?

Are policies and procedures governing work general or specific?

How much initiative or latitude is the employee allowed to plan or execute the work?

4. Initiative and originality required.

This factor relates to the degree of inventiveness, imagination, and ability to innovate or create that is required in the work, the extent to which the work requires new approaches or previously unused methods and deviations from standard work practices. The resourcefulness or ingenuity required to solve new problems or old problems in new ways is the crux of this factor.

Consider the following:

How much initiative is given the employee in deciding how to accomplish the assignment?

How much and what type of review is given to the work while in process?

Is the employee required to devise new methods or procedures?

Does the employee adapt existing methods to fit the assignment?

Does the employee work out solutions to problems for which no existing solution exists?

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**STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Does the employee analyze and evaluate the recommendations of others in relation to the above?

5. Purposes and nature of person-to-person work relationships.

This factor includes what, why, how, and with whom relations are maintained with persons not in the supervisory chain based within or outside the agency. The purposes typically include (a) to give or secure information, (b) render personal service, (c) perform administrative services, (d) explain policies or method, (e) interpret programs, plans or individual actions, (f) coordinate and secure cooperation, or (g) resolve controversies by means of personal contact.

Consider the following:

What contacts does the employee have with others within the agency? Outside the agency?

What is the purpose of these contacts?

What type of subject matter is dealt with?

Is the subject matter simple, complex, broad, narrow, controversial?

What conditions make it easy or difficult to accomplish these contacts?

During these contacts, does the employee have authority to make official commitments?

6. Nature and scope of recommendations, decisions, commitments, and consequence of error.

This reflects the questions, problems, or types of cases regarding which the employee makes recommendations, decisions, commitments, or conclusions which affect operations, plans, programs, methods, or policies; and the degree of finality in such judgments or actions as measured against such criteria as instructions, delegated authority, and review by supervisors, or agency policies, rules, regulations, statutes, or precedents.

Also included is the likelihood of an error being made by a prudent

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**STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

employee and the consequence of that error to individuals, operations or programs.

Consider the following:

What decisions does the employee make which are not reviewed by others?

If the employee's decisions are reviewed, what is the type and extent of this review?

What types of problems are these and how important are they?

What is the employee's responsibility for recommendations on agency programs and policy?

How final are the employee's decisions and recommendations in relation to the functions of the agency?

What would be the consequence of errors or inadequacies in these recommendations and decisions?

7. Nature and extent of supervision exercised over the work of other employees.

“Nature of supervision exercised” includes the kinds of supervisory responsibilities in areas such as setting policies; establishing objectives; planning, organizing and establishing work flow; making assignments and reviewing work; selecting, training, and rating performance of employees; coordinating production; and attending to the personnel and administrative functions of the organization.

“Extent” includes the degree of independence and responsibility with which such functions are performed, the scope of performance as reflected in the difficulty of the work, the size and complexity of the organization, the variety of functions, etc.

Consider the following:

What is the extent of the employee's formulation of policies and the scope of these policies?

What is the responsibility for control over the objectives and

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STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

purpose of the work supervised and the form and quality of the end product?

Does the employee plan for an entire organization or plan specific techniques for given tasks?

What is the employee's responsibility for organization of work, work flow and methods of operation? Does the employee determine work methods or assure that approved methods are used?

What latitude does the employee have in making work assignments?

What type of review does the employee make of the work of others – detailed, general, technical, policy, administrative?

What is the extent of the employee's responsibility in selecting, promoting, transferring, evaluating and disciplining employees and settling grievances?

What general administrative responsibilities does the employee have (supplies, equipment, budgeting)?

What is the number and class level of subordinates supervised?
What is the complexity of the organization supervised?

8. Qualifications required.

“Qualifications required” includes the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other requirements for performance of the work. **The qualifications required should reflect the other seven factors**, as well as in the tasks assigned to the position. [Further information on writing knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) requirements is contained in SOP 07-III.]

Consider the following:

What knowledge is required for reasonable success in the position?

What knowledge is required upon entry to the job?

What knowledge can be gained on the job in a reasonable period?

The Classification System

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

What skills and what level of proficiency are required for the position?

Are these skills required at entry or can they be acquired during the probationary period?

What kinds of machines and equipment are used?

What general abilities are required for the position?

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